

Prizes and Honours

CONGRATULATIONS go to Professor James Fairhead (pictured), who has been elected as a **Fellow of the British Academy**. Election to this Fellowship recognises the highest scholarly distinction in the humanities and social sciences, and James joins the ranks of such celebrated anthropologists as Marilyn Strathern, Marshall Sahlins, and Alan Macfarlane.

Responding to the recognition, James said, “I’m very honoured to have been elected as a Fellow, and excited to be able to contribute more to the Academy’s wide-ranging support of the social sciences and humanities and to new generations of scholars.

“Working with colleagues at Sussex and the vibrant **Anthropology** and International Development

Departments in our fantastic School of Global Studies has been a great platform for scholarship that makes a difference, so any recognition for my own contribution here is surely a recognition of this too, just as it is for my research collaborators globally.”

A FURTHER honour was awarded this term to Dr Paul Boyce, whose volume - edited with E.J. Gonzalez-Polledo and Silvia Posocco - *Queering Knowledge: Analytics, Devices and Investments after Marilyn Strathern*, was awarded the **Ruth Benedict Prize for Outstanding Edited Volume, 2020**.

This prestigious prize, awarded by the Association for Queer Anthropology at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, acknowledges



Professor Fairhead, FBA

excellence in academic work on topics relating to lesbians, gay men, bisexual people, transgender people, and other formations of sexuality and gender.

Announcing the prize, the judges described *Queering Knowledge* as “outstanding”. The introduction, which was co-written by Paul, was praised as an “excellent”

reimagining of queer anthropology which moves beyond familiar framings of ‘queer’ and ‘gendered’ subjectivities to center queerness as a fundamental element of the epistemological and representational practices of anthropology.

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Visiting Scholar

THE Department of Anthropology was delighted to welcome **Dr Ibtisam Al-Wahaibi** as a Visiting Research Fellow in the Autumn term.

Dr Al-Wahaibi is Assistant Professor of Communication in the College of Economics and Political Science at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. After studying for two MA degrees—in Australia and UK, respectively—in 2012 Dr Al-Wahaibi received a PhD in Communication and Management from Sheffield University. Her

PhD research—entitled “Gender, discourse and the politics of interaction”—analysed communicative events in institutionalized settings in Oman, using discourse analysis and discursive psychology approaches. This built on her wider interests in understanding the relationships between social structures and individuals, and how taken-for-granted ideas influence how people talk and present themselves in workplace contexts. Her current research focuses on imagery, representation and communication

between camels and humans in Oman. Her research suggests that the emotions and behavior of both camels and their owners leads to processes of the co-creation of meanings.



Recent Presentations and Seminars

As ever, this has been a busy term for knowledge dissemination from the Department of Anthropology. Sussex scholars have presented at a wide range of public and academic events despite – and in some cases, because of – the coronavirus pandemic.

Dr Paul Boyce, with colleagues from Delhi and Loughborough, hosted the event “COVID 19 Assemblages: Queer and Feminist Perspectives from South Asia” in November as part of the **Sussex 2020 Festival of Social Sciences**. Building on ongoing activities aimed at understanding vulnerabilities faced by gender and sexual minorities in South Asia in relation to COVID 19, this event explored a range of concerns including informal employment, migratory pressures, violence at home (in lockdown) and class and caste prejudices, and featured discussions with queer and feminist activists, academics, and authors from South Asia.

This event was in conjunction with the launch of a new book series *Ethnographic Innovations, South*

Asian Perspectives, which Dr Boyce is editing with colleagues and which will be published by Routledge.

DR Rebecca Prentice presented her research in a December webinar – “**The Garment Sector Unraveling in Bangladesh: Rethinking the Health, Safety, and Livelihoods of Workers During a Global Pandemic**” which was hosted by the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies at UC Berkeley, the UC Berkeley Institute for South Asia Studies, and the Stanford Center for South Asia.

Dr Prentice presented an overview of the role of health in factory work, the oversight of health in labor improvements and labor rights, and why COVID-19 presents an opportunity to rethink approaches to these.

PROFESSOR Magnus Marsden gave an invited presentation to the **2020 Keimyung International Conference on the Silk Road and Central Asia**,

which was hosted by Acta Vva Seria, the Journal for Silk Road and Central Asian Studies.

Professor Marsden’s presentation, “**Beyond the Silk Roads: Trade, Mobility and Geopolitics across Eurasia**”, identified two corridors of connectivity authored by long-distance traders from Afghanistan and Central Asia: a ‘Eurasian corridor’ between East Asia and Post-Soviet Eurasia, and a ‘West Asian corridor’ which links East Asia to Turkey and

the Arabian Peninsula. He stressed the importance of the intersections between land and sea networks to research in Indian Ocean Studies. A video of his presentation can be found at actaviaserica.org, along with contributions from Michael Dunford, Emeritus Professor at the School of Global Studies, Sussex University, and other participants from around the world.

Afgan Jewry from 100CE to the Present Day

DRAWING on his expertise in the cultures and histories of the inhabitants of Afghanistan, Professor Magnus Marsden presented, in late november, a public talk to the congregation of the Hale Shule synagogue in Cheshire, about the history of Jewish communities in the region.

His talk explored both the lives of Afghan Jews in recent times and their relationship to Jewish communities in neighbouring states. He also outlined the reasons for their emigration from Afghanistan in the 1950s.



This public engagement allowed Professor Marsden to share with the Hale Shule community the importance of territories in Afghanistan to Afghan Jewish identity, and the ways in which members of that community have played an active role in restoring some of the sites there. As his talk demonstrated, the cosmopolitan history and heritage of the region remains central to contemporary cultural dynamics in Afghanistan.



Dr Prentice presenting

Upcoming Events

A SCREENING of a filmed theatre piece written by **Professor Raminder Kaur** and directed by Mukul Agmed will be given at 3pm on the 19th of December.

Lalon: Heart of Madness, celebrates the work of the mystical 19th century Bengali Baul, Lalon Shah. A prolific and influential philosopher and poet, Lalon Shah remains a celebrated icon of Bengali culture. Here, Professor Kaur's production

explores the songs and messages of harmony and religious tolerance authored by Lalon Shah, through her depiction of two contexts: These are pre-partition Bengal, and contemporary Bangladesh, where the

character Luna, a woman from Whitechapel, visits the Lalon Mela, a festival held in commemoration of the legendary philosopher.

Tickets are free but must be booked in advance at <https://bit.ly/lalonshah>.

This theatre production is supported by the Sussex Asia Centre.

“A journey into the heart of a mystical Baul singer crosses over into a British Bangladeshi woman’s quest for fulfilment”

DR Agathe Mora, with colleagues on the organising committee for Allegra - EASA Lawnet have organised a **Webinar Series in honour of Professor Sally Merry**, the noted anthropologist and director

of the Centre for Human Rights and Global Justice at the New York University School of Law, who passed away in September.

The twelve webinars in the series will explore the current state of legal anthropology, and will feature the work of both young and established scholars, exploring n legal matters of critical relevance to contemporary societal debates.

The first webinar will be held on the **11th of December at 2:00 Central Eastern Time**, and the series will run until Summer. The full programme and connection details can be found at <http://bit.ly/sallymerry>.

THE Social Science and Ethics Research Group, hosted by the Department of Anthropology, will hold a series of online workshops

between the 14th and 21st of December. The series - **Methodologies in the Anthropology of Ethics** - was organised by Drs Matthew Doyle, James McMurray, and Santiago Ripoll, and will include Dr Demet Dinler and Professor Jon Mitchell as discussants. Arranged over three panels - exploring Experience and the Human Condition, Social Action and the Everyday, and the Mind, Cognition and Culture - the workshop will include twelve influential international scholars with expertise in the Anthropology of Ethics, and will examine the question of whether the expanding sub-field of the anthropology of ethics requires any special methodologies.

Full details can be found at <https://bit.ly/sussexethics>.



Lalon - Heart of Madness

Appointments and Departures

THE Department will dearly miss the three valuable colleagues who decided to take Voluntary Severance in 2020. Drs Mark Leopold and Pete Luetchford departed on the 30th of September, and Professor Jane Cowan will leave on the 18th of December.

Jane joined the Department

of Anthropology at Sussex in 1991, after earning her PhD in Sociocultural Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Peter came to Sussex five years later as a PhD student, having taken an MA in Anthropology and Sociology (1986) from the University

of Aberdeen. He began teaching at Sussex in 2002.

Mark earned a D.Phil in Social Anthropology at Oxford in 2001, after an earlier career in journalism. He joined the Anthropology Department in 2006.

The Department wishes them all the best in their future endeavours.

THREE new Postdoctoral Fellows - Juan Pablo Sarmiento Barletti, Giancarlo Rolando and Chris Hewlett - were welcomed to the Department as they join Evan Killick's ESRC project 'The Making of an Integrated Landscape of Conservation'.

James McMurray also joined with a one-year Lectureship.



Jane Cowan



Mark Leopold



Peter Luetchford

Grants and Publications

Maya Unnithan and Priya Deshingkar have been successful in obtaining Phase 1 funding from the Novonordisk foundation to develop a major grant proposal with partners in Nigeria, Ethiopia 3 and Bangladesh, CORTH and Belgian counterpart, to work on 'improving access to integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health and Mental Health services among mobile populations'.

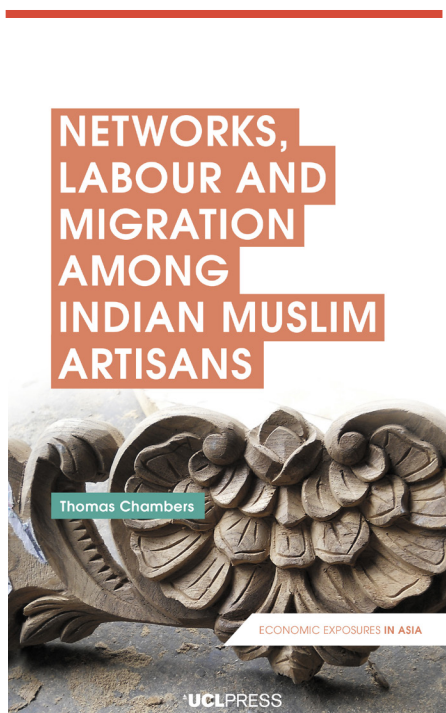
Filippo Osella has been awarded a small joint research grant of £75,000 by the University of Hyderabad. Professor

Osella and Prof VJ Varghese will be working on a 3 years project entitled "Brokering Mobility: Migration Brokerage between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries".

PHD alumnus Thomas Chambers has just published a book - *Networks, Labour and Migration among Indian Muslim Artisans* - with UCL Press.

This ethnographic exploration of life, work and migration in the Muslim-dominated woodworking industry communities of Northern India draws on Dr Chamber's PhD research, conducted whilst he was at the University of Sussex.

Illustrating the ways in which artisanal labour has changed and adapted under the pressures of increasingly liberalised and globalised production networks, Dr Chamber's ethnography follows established artisanal connections across India and beyond, to the Gulf.



In Other News

RECENT Masters graduate Hannah Schwemin (MA, Anthropology of Development and Social Transformation, 2019-2020) has secured the position of Regional Information Manager with the Royal National Institute for Deaf People.

CONGRATULATIONS to Wendy Ashall, whose kind and collaborative teaching practices were recognised this term with a Sussex Spirit Award. This education award celebrates the work of staff who have demonstrated the core Sussex virtues of kindness, integrity, inclusion, collaboration and courage.

NAVEED Ahmad Shinwari, PhD, passed his virtual *viva voce* with only minor corrections in late November. Supervised by Professors Magnus Marsden and Filippo Osella, Dr Shinwari was examined by Professors Geert De Neve and Anatol Lieven.



Wendy Ashall

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